

Message Text

SECRET

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11

ACTION NEA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NSC-10 NSCE-00 CIAE-00 INR-10

NSAE-00 RSC-01 IO-03 EUR-10 PRS-01 L-02 DRC-01 /059 W

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FM AMEMBASSY KABUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5266

INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 2873

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

CINCPAC

UEHDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 391

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 KABUL 6995

LIMDIS

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, AF

SUBJECT: US-AFGHAN RELATIONS--MEETING WITH DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

1. SUMMARY: CHARGE'S INITIAL CALL ON DEPPRIMIN SHARQ
PRODUCED WHAT WE INTERPRET AS WELCOME MESSAGE FROM DAUD THAT GOA
INTENDS DO ITS BEST MAINTAIN GOOD US-AFGHAN RELATIONS.
REGARDING ABORTIVE COUP, SHARQ SAID GOA ABSOLUTELY CERTAIN THAT
USG NOT RPT NOT INVOLVED; ONLY GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN WHICH
WAS IN CONTACT WITH PLOTTERS. ALTHOUGH SOME PERSONS WERE
ASSERTING US INVOLVEMENT, GOA HAD ORDERED A STOP TO SUCH RUMORS,
DETERMINED PREVENT THOSE SEEKING TO DAMAGE US-AFGHAN RELATIONS
FROM HAVING ANY SUCCESS. SHARQ SAID REGIME COMPLETELY SATISFIED
WITH MANNER IN WHICH USMISSION AND ITS PERSONNEL HAD CONDUCTED
SELVES SINCE JULY 17 COUP. US WOULD SOON SEE THAT ITS "TRUE
FRIENDS" WERE "REVOLUTIONARIES" NOW IN POWER AND NOT "CORRUPT

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REACTIONARIES OF OLD REGIME." END SUMMARY

2. MY COURTESY CALL ON DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER HASAN SHARQ SEPTEMBER 27 EVOLVED FROM THE INITIAL AND SOMEWHAT BANAL DIPLOMATIC EXPRESSIONS OF US-AFGHAN FRIENDSHIP INTO A SIGNIFICANT EXCHANGE ABOUT PREVALENT RUMORS CONCERNING ALLEGED US INVOLVEMENT IN THE "PLOT" RECENTLY UNCOVERED HERE AGAINST THE DAUD REGIME. INITIALLY STIFF AND FORMAL, THOUGH NOT UNFRIENDLY, DR. SHARQ (WHO SPOKE IN FARSI THROUGH A FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIAL ACTING AS INTERPRETER) WARMED PERCEPTABLY DURING OUR DISCUSSION. HE IS SOFT-SPOKEN AND APPEARED SOMNOLENT AT FIRST. HOWEVER, HE BECAME QUITE ANIMATED AS OUR MEETING CONTINUED AND SHOWED CONSIDERABLE FRIENDLY WARMTH TOWARD ITS CONCLUSION. WIDELY CONSIDERED BY DIPLOMATS HERE AS A LIGHT-WEIGHT, IMPORTANT ONLY AS A TRUSTED MOUTHPIECE FOR PRESIDENT DAUD, SHARQ STRUCK ME RATHER AS A WILY, INTELLIGENT MAN OPERATING ON A VERY SHORT LEASH.

3. TO INITIATE CONVERSATION I ALLUDED TO THE LONG-STANDING US POLICY OF FRIENDSHIP AND SUPPORT FOR AFGHANISTAN WHICH DATES BACK WELL INTO PRESIDENT DAUD'S PREVIOUS TENURE AS PRIME MINISTER. I STRESSED THAT WE HOPED TO CONTINUE THIS KIND OF FRIENDLY RELATIONSHIP, PROVIDING BOTH ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE AND POLITICAL ENCOURAGEMENT TO ASSIST AFGHANISTAN MAINTAIN ITS TRADITIONAL INDEPENDENCE AND NON-ALIGNED POSTURE IN THE REGION.

4. SHARQ RESPONDED THAT THE "REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT" SHARED FULLY THE HOPE THAT ITS RELATIONS WITH THE US WOULD REMAIN FRIENDLY AND COOPERATIVE, AND STRESSED THAT THIS WAS THE GOAL INTENT. HE FIRST ALLUDED CAUTIOUSLY AND LATER MORE OPENLY TO THE FACT THAT "THERE WERE INDIVIDUALS SEEKING TO CAUSE DIFFICULTY AND TO WORSEN US-AFGHAN RELATIONS." HOWEVER, HE ASSURED ME ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS DURING THE CONVERSATION THAT THESE UNNAMED ELEMENTS WOULD IN NO WAY SUCCEED IN DISTURBING US-AFGHAN TIES. WHEN I ACKNOWLEDGED THAT WE TOO KNEW THERE WERE THOSE WHO WOULD LIKE TO SEE OUR RELATIONSHIP WORSEN, I INQUIRED WHETHER DR. SHARQ MIGHT SUGGEST ANY WAYS IN WHICH WE COULD HELP TO COUNTER SUCH EFFORTS. HIS REPLY WAS LENGTHY AND SURPRISINGLY ELOQUENT. HE FIRST SAID THAT WE SHOULD NOT BE MISLED IF A FEW INDIVIDUALS WORKING IN OUR PROJECTS OR IN THOSE OF OTHER FRIENDLY DONOR COUNTRIES WERE ARRESTED. THESE INDIVI-

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DUALS WOULD SAY THAT THEY WERE SUFFERING FOR THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO US. ON THE CONTRARY, HE SAID, NOTHING COULD BE FARTHER FROM THE TRUTH. THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO US IN NO WAY AFFECTED THEIR CURRENT PROBLEMS; RATHER IT WAS THEIR PERSONAL ACTIVITIES QUITE APART FROM THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO US FOR WHICH THEY WERE BEING HELD ACCOUNTABLE. AND SOME OF THESE ACTIVITIES MIGHT BE INIMICAL TO THE INTERESTS OF AFGHANISTAN. (NOTE: I SAW DEPFONMIN WAHID ABDULLAH LATER SAME DAY (SEPTEL) AND ASKED HIM TO BE MORE

PRECISE ABOUT WHAT ELEMENTS SHARQ HAD REFERRED IN THESE COMMENTS. ABDULLAH SAID THEY ARE THE "NUMEROUS SO-CALLED FRINDS OF YOURS, MANY EDUCATED IN THE US, WHO BECAME TERRIBLY CORRUPT UNDER THE PREVIOUS REGIME, AND WHO NOW MUST PAY FOR THEIR CORRUPTION.)

5. DR. SHARQ THEN WITHOUT PROMPTING MOVED TO A MORE DIRECT DISCUSSION OF THE MANY ARRESTS WHICH HAVE OCCURRED SINCE

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S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 KABUL 6995

LIMDIS

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

SEPTEMBER 20 IN CONNECTION WITH THE "ANTI-REGIME CONSPIRACY" WHICH HAD BEEN UNCOVERED. HE MADE A POINT OF SAYING IN TWO OR THREE DIFFERENT WAYS THAT THE REGIME HAD OBSERVED EXTREMELY CAREFULLY THE BEHAVIOR OF THE USMISSION AND ALL ITS PERSONNEL SINCE JULY 17 AND THAT THEY WERE PLEASED TO SEE THAT WE HAD BEHAVED COMPLETELY PROPERLY IN ALL RESPECTS TOWARD THE NEW GOVERNMENT. THE GOVERNMENT WAS AWARE OF STORIES CIRCULATING WHICH PURPORTED TO LINK THE US TO THE NEFARIOUS ACTIVITIES OF THE GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN IN ENCOURAGING AND EVEN FINANCING

THOSE PLOTTING AGAINST THE DAUD REGIME. HE SAID THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS COMPLETELY CONVINCED THAT THESE STORIES WERE FALSE; NOT ONE SHRED OF EVIDENCE HAD COME TO LIGHT WHICH WOULD SUPPORT THEM. CONSEQUENTLY, HE SAID, "THEY HAD ORDERED THEIR PEOPLE TO TRY TO SEE THAT SUCH DISRUPTIVE RUMORS AND STORIES CEASE CIRCULATIONS." HE STRESSED "THAT REACTIONARY PERSONS" WHO WERE IMPLICATED MIGHT TRY TO IMPLY THAT IT WAS THEIR TRUE FRIENDSHIP FOR THE US WHICH HAD GOTEN THEM INTO TROUBLE WITH
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THE REGIME, AND HE AGAIN STRESSED THAT THIS WAS WHOLLY INCORRECT.

6. I EXPRESSED MY GREAT PLEASURE AT HEARING THIS AFFIRMATION, ADMITTED THAT WE TOO HAD HEARD SUCH STORIES, BUT THAT KNOWING AS WE DID THAT THEY WERE ABSOLUTELY FALSE, WE HAD BEEN CONFIDENT THE AFGHAN GOVERNMENT WOULD NOT GIVE THEM CREDENCE. I BRIEFLY SUMMARIZED OUR OVERALL POLICY INTERESTS IN THIS REGION AS BEING WHOLLY DISINTERESTED, IN SUPPORT OF THE INDEPENDENCE AND INTEGRITY OF AFGHANISTAN AS WELL AS THAT OF ITS NEIGHBORS. I EMPHASIZED OUR VIEW THAT STABILITY AND TRANQUILLITY IN THE REGION ARE ESSENTIAL CONDITIONS FOR AFGHANISTAN AND OTHER ADJACENT COUNTRIES TO DEVELOP IN THE DIRECTION THEIR PEOPLES WISH THEM TO GO.

7. AS I WAS LEAVING DR. SHARQ AGAIN EMPHASIZED HIS COMPLETE CONFIDENCE IN THE STRENGTH OF US-AFGHAN FRIENDSHIP AND PLEDGED THAT THE REGIME WOULD MAKE SURE THAT NOTHING HAPPENED TO WEAKEN IT. HE ENCOURAGED ME TO CONTACT HIM AT ANY TIME ON ANY MATTER OF CONCERN TO US. HE ADDED THAT WE WOULD SEE IN THE WEEKS AHEAD THAT THE "REVOLUTIONARIES" ARE THE "TRUE FRIENDS OF THE US," NOT THE "CORRUPT REACTIONARIES OF THE OLD REGIME."

8. COMMENT: I WAS STRUCK BY THE UNSOLICITED REMARKS SUMMARIZED ABOVE BECAUSE OF SHARQ'S INTIMATE RELATIONSHIP TO PRESIDENT DAUD AND HIS REPUTATION OF BEING LITTLE MORE THAN A DAUD MOUTHPIECE. IT SEEMS TO US THAT WE HAVE RECEIVED A VERY ENCOURAGING STATEMENT OF PRESIDENT DAUD'S CONFIDENCE IN THE FACE OF WHAT HAVE UNDOUBTEDLY BEEN EFFORTS BY OTHERS IN THE REGIME TO LINK US TO THE RECENT PLOT. THIS HAS OCCURED IN THE FACE OF WHAT CERTAINLY SEEMS TO BE AN UNSHAKEABLE CONVICTION THAT PAKISTAN HAS BEEN DEEPLY INVOLVED IN THE PLOT, AND THE IMPACT OF BHUTTO'S VISIT TO THE US WITH THE STRIKING PUBLIC DEMONSTRATION OF CLOSE US-PAKISTAN TIES. OF COURSE EXTENT TO WHICH SHARQ AND/OR DAUD'S CONFIDENCE IN THE PROPRIETY OF US BEHAVIOR HERE IT IS BEING EFFECTIVELY COMMUNICATED DOWNWARD INTO THEM THROUGH THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE TO OTHER LAYERS OF THE REGIME MAY BE A DIFFERENT MATTER. SOME DIMINUTION SEEMS TO HAVE ALREADY OCCURRED IN RUMORS ABOUT ALLEGED US INVOLVEMENT. WE WILL TRY TO WATCH AND LISTEN CAREFULLY DURING THE DAYS AHEAD TO SEE IF SHARQ'S

SEEMINGLY AND EVEN FERVENT POLICY STATEMENT IS REFLECTED BY
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THE WHOLLY CONTROLLED GOVERNMENT PRESS AND IN THE
DIPLOMATIC AND BAZAAR RUMOR MILLS.

9. THERE WERE OBVIOUSLY SOME DISTURBING HINTS ABOUT POSSIBLE
ARRESTS TO COME, PRESUMABLY AMONG AFGHAN OR THIRD-COUNTRY
NATIONAL EMPLOYEES OF THE MISSION WHO MAY BE UNDER SUSPICION.
THUS FAR THERE HAVE BEEN SEVERAL CASES OF THESE EMPLOYEES
BEING SUMMONED TO THE POLICE STATION AND INTERROGATED ABOUT
THE VALIDITY OF THEIR WORK PERMITS AND SO FORTH. HOWEVER, IT
CANNOT REASONABLY BE ARGUED THAT WE HAVE BEEN SUBJECTED TO ANY
REAL HARRASSMENT TO DATE. SHARQ'S WORDS LEND HOPE THAT THIS MAY
NOT OCCUR. IN AN EARLIER CONVERSATION WITH DEPFONMIN WAHID
ABDULLAH I WAS ASSURED THAT AFGHAN GOVERNMENT POLICY DOES NOT
LOOK TOWARD PRECIPITATE FIRING OF THIRD-COUNTRY NATIONALS NOW
EMPLOYED BY OUR MISSION OR OTHER FOREIGN MISSIONS, WHILE IT
DOES URGE REPLACEMENT BY QUALIFIED AFGHANS GRADUALLY AS
ATTRITION OCCURS. I WAS HOWEVER WARNED THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD
A "SERIOUS SPY PROBLEM WITH THE PAKISTANIS HERE" AND THAT
WE SHOULD USE INDIANS RATHER THAN PAKISTANIS AS EMPLOYEES
TO AVOID DIFFICULTY.

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